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**ILLINOIS
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
INFORMATION AUTHORITY**

The Need for Information

Criminal justice in Illinois is carried out by hundreds of law enforcement, prosecutorial, public defense, judicial and correctional agencies. Each of them has specific and unique statutory responsibilities. Together they form Illinois' criminal justice *system*.

For this system to serve and protect the public effectively, special attention must be paid to how the system's components interact. Especially important is the need to coordinate the use of *information* within criminal justice. Officials at all levels need accurate up-to-date information when making their most important decisions: Police need information to identify and apprehend criminals, prosecutors use data when deciding what charges to file, judges rely on information when setting bail and determining just sentences, and corrections officers need data to manage jails and prisons properly.

Accompanying this need for information has been a boom in computer technology. Today's computers allow criminal justice agencies to store, analyze and share information in ways they never could before.

But while the price of computer *hardware* has fallen dramatically in recent years, the cost of developing and managing increasingly complex *data processing systems* continues to rise. Many criminal justice agencies lack the technical expertise to recognize their data processing needs and to implement practical solutions. For them, information management represents one of their biggest expenses and one of their most formidable problems.

Because many of these agencies share similar data needs, a coordinated approach is the best way to improve the availability and usefulness of criminal justice information and control spiraling costs. Recognizing this fact, the Illinois General Assembly, at Governor James R. Thompson's request, created the **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority**, an agency of the State government that began operation on Jan. 1, 1983. The Authority's goals are to help State and local agencies reduce crime and improve criminal justice management through information technology, policy development, research and technical assistance.

What Is the Authority?

The Authority is a unique governmental body made up of State and local criminal justice officials, representatives of the general public and a full-time professional staff.

The Authority's 15-member board includes some of Illinois' top criminal justice officials and experts from the private sector. Authority members provide the experience and know-how to identify information problems and to propose workable solutions.

The Authority's 15 members include:

- *Illinois Attorney General (or his designee)*
- *Illinois Director of Corrections*
- *Illinois Director of State Police*
- *Director of the Illinois State's Attorneys Appellate Service Commission*
- *Sheriff of Cook County*
- *State's Attorney of Cook County*
- *Chicago Police Superintendent*
- *A Sheriff of a County other than Cook*
- *A State's Attorney of a County other than Cook*
- *A Police Chief outside Chicago*
- *Five Members of the Public*

Authority members are supported by a professional staff trained in information technology, data analysis and criminal justice administration. Working out of the Authority's office in Chicago, the staff perform a range of functions: They develop and operate automated information systems, they analyze criminal justice policies and crime trends, they provide training and technical assistance to other criminal justice professionals and they administer Federal grants, among other things.

With the combined expertise of its members and staff, the Authority is the State's forum for analyzing and solving both the information problems of individual criminal justice agencies and the interagency data problems that can hamper effective criminal justice.

Information Systems

Much of the Authority's work involves developing and operating computerized information systems for State and local criminal justice agencies. These systems are part of the Authority's **Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS)**, a comprehensive set of computer packages that help agencies manage information and improve their operations. The CJIS systems include:

✓ **The Police Information Management System.** *PIMS automates the collection and maintenance of police records. The system provides law enforcement agencies with the information they need to analyze crime, plan tactical efforts, manage resources and report data automatically to the Uniform Crime Reporting program. PIMS also links users to other State and national law enforcement computer systems.*

✓ **The Rapid Automated Prosecution System.** *RAPS is designed to satisfy the information management needs of the modern prosecutor's office. The system automatically constructs case files and provides the information and documents needed to carry a case from arrest through appeal.*

✓ **The Correctional Institution Management Information System.** *CIMIS maintains information about inmates at State prisons and local jails. Its uses range from identifying and placing inmates to supporting the logistics of moving inmates to court and work assignments.*

The Authority also develops information systems that meet specialized criminal justice needs. For example, the **Police Training Board System** automates recordkeeping and training reimbursement procedures for the Illinois Local Governmental Law Enforcement Officers Training Board. Another Authority—developed system manages the trust funds of inmates of Cook County Jail.

Policy and Research

Computer systems, however, represent only part of the Authority's work. The Authority is also the State agency primarily responsible for conducting criminal justice research and for advising the Governor and the General Assembly on criminal justice information policies. In this area, the Authority:

✓ *Analyzes the management operations of criminal justice agencies and helps coordinate the exchange of information among them. For example, the Authority monitors the reporting of criminal justice data to Statewide repositories to ensure they contain accurate, up-to-date information.*

✓ *Researches important criminal justice issues (recidivism, prison crowding, specific crime trends, etc.) and reports on the quality and availability of criminal justice data.*

✓ *Answers requests for statistics and other information about criminal justice in Illinois. These requests come from government officials, researchers, the media and the public.*

✓ *Develops and shares statistical methodologies and data analysis procedures. This allows local crime analysts who don't have access to elaborate data processing facilities to use crime statistics more effectively. The methodologies include ways to analyze crime patterns over time and to account for seasonality in crime statistics.*

✓ *Recommends legislation and helps set policies regarding criminal justice information issues. For example, the Authority has issued recommendations regarding the public dissemination of criminal history information and the police response to missing person reports.*

✓ *Periodically audits Statewide databases of criminal justice information. These audits help ensure the accuracy and completeness of this information.*

Personal Privacy Issues

The Authority also handles the delicate, yet essential, task of monitoring the integrity of criminal history record information, while protecting the constitutional privacy rights of Illinois citizens about whom criminal history information has been collected. The Authority annually audits the State central repository for criminal history records to examine the accuracy and completeness of those data. The Authority also issues recommendations on how the criminal history database can be improved, and it ensures the Illinois repository complies with Federal and State laws concerning the privacy and security of criminal history records.

In addition, the Authority is the sole administrative appeal body in Illinois for conducting hearings and determining individual challenges to the accuracy and completeness of criminal history record information.



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Federal Assistance

Legislation passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by President Reagan in 1984 created new Federal aid programs for criminal justice. The Authority administers two of these block grant programs in Illinois: the Justice Assistance Act, which helps state and local governments carry out programs for improving criminal justice; and the Victims of Crime Act, which provides assistance to organizations that help crime victims.

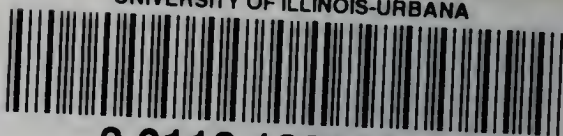
In distributing these funds, the Authority first identifies the State's criminal justice needs through techniques such as public hearings and data analysis. The Authority then awards grants to deserving public and private organizations, and it monitors all grants to ensure compliance with State and Federal regulations.

Crime Prevention

An informed citizenry, working with local authorities, is one of the best ways to combat crime in our communities. But many people who want to get involved in crime prevention simply don't know how.

The Authority promotes crime prevention in Illinois by putting information in the hands of people who can make it happen. As the State agency responsible for disseminating public information about crime prevention, the Authority develops and distributes brochures, public service announcements and other informational materials. These materials are tailored specifically toward the crime prevention needs of Illinois communities.

The Authority is also a member of the **National Crime Prevention Coalition** and is the Illinois headquarters for McGruff, the anti-crime dog featured in the Advertising Council's *Take a Bite Out of Crime* campaign.



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Technical Assistance

In all its work, the Authority brings a commitment to excellence and the technical expertise to get the job done. The Authority and its professional staff stand ready to assist government agencies and private organizations in developing criminal justice information systems, conducting policy-relevant research and creating programs and policies that improve the management of criminal justice in Illinois. To find out more about the Authority, contact us at the following address:

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The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is my headquarters in Illinois. If you want to know how we can help you "Take a Bite Out of Crime," complete this card and mail it to:



McGruff
120 South Riverside Plaza
Chicago, IL 60606-3997

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

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